

Application No.: 09/588,350

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REMARKS

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Prior to examination of the present RCE application, applicant provides the following comments relative to the patentability of the new claims.

In the prior art previously cited by the Examiner and those more closely related to the present invention, there is simple communication between a user (customer), an issuer (e.g., airline) and an account managing center (e.g., credit card company). Thus, in a typical example where an airline ticket is requested online, a user makes a reservation with an airline and submits credit card information. The airline then contacts the credit card company to verify the account number and whether the charged amount is authorized for payment. The database of the credit card company simply verifies the credit card account number, possibly a PIN corresponding to that account, and whether there are sufficient funds to cover the requested payment.

The present invention is directed to a totally different concept of generating an electronic ticket which involves a great deal more interactivity and verification than is employed in the typical scenario just discussed. Although there is no particular step of the present invention that is novel, it is the combination or sequence of events that presents a different way to validate and generate an electronic ticket for a user.

Referring to Fig. 1, the basic system of the present invention includes individual account units for different users (customers) that are contained at the site of an account managing center. Each user account unit corresponds to a storage address that contains storage capability for an electronic ticket as well as user identifier data.

In a typical purchase transaction and as claimed, a user at terminal 300A transmits a user account storage address and a demand for ticket issuance from the user terminal unit to an electronic ticket issuer unit. The issuer unit then transmits the demand for issuance to an account unit which controls the account storage address of the user. The issuer unit accesses the account storage address of the unit and causes the accessed account unit to transmit to the issuer unit a certificate of account storage address which guarantees a correspondence relationship between

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the account storage address assigned to the user and an identifier of the user of the account unit. The issuer unit verifies the certificate of account storage address and allows the issuer unit to use the identifier of the user contained in the certificate of account storage address upon successful verification. Subsequently, the issuer unit prepares an electronic ticket inclusive of the user identifier and the electronic ticket is transmitted to the account unit through the communication network. The account unit corresponding to the user's account storage address stores the electronic ticket in the account unit for subsequent retrieval. This sequence of events as represented by claim 27, is quite different from the simple credit card authorization process that merely validates the existence of an account number and the sufficient funds to cover a requested purchase.

The claimed invention provides a system including user terminal units, account units and issuer units on a communication network. Each of the account units is adapted to store electronic ticket information issued by an issuer unit to a user corresponding to the account unit, and when preparing the ticket, the user can safely extract the electronic ticket information from the user's account unit designated by an address. The present invention processes transactions on a one to one basis between single issuers and users. It does not provide a system that includes a central controller which implements conditional purchases as in the cited Walker patent. In Walker, after payment is guaranteed, the guaranteed purchase offer is then made available to a plurality of potential sellers by posting the offer using the web site linked to central controller 200. Periodic maintenance is performed by central controller 200 to ensure that "active" offers have not expired. A potential seller can use the Walker system to browse offers and submit an electronic acceptance of a desirable offer.

According to the Walker patent, there is shown a central controller which deals with the reselling of tickets and anyone who knows the address of the central controller can access the central controller. Whereas, in the present invention, account units on the network are provided in correspondence with users, and each account unit is accessible only by those units which are given an address of the account unit by the user. That is, in the present invention, there is a process of transmitting a user's account storage address to an issuer unit as recited in the claims so that the issuer unit can transmit the electronic ticket information to the user's account unit or process of transmitting user's account storage address to a ticket examiner unit so that the ticket

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examiner unit can access the account unit for the electronic ticket information to be examined. The present invention differs from Walker's system in both the problem to be solved and the arrangement to be implemented.

Independent claim 27 is directed to procedures for issuance of electronic ticket information, while the invention of independent claim 28 is directed to procedures for consumption of electronic ticket information. Applicant wishes to emphasize that the electronic ticket information is electronically verified and the issuer of the electronic ticket information allows the user to obtain a ticket as can be understood from the description on page 14, line 23 to page 15, line 4 of the present specification.

In contrast, the description at col. 4, lines 62-67 and col. 5, lines 1-4 in the Walker patent concerns the customer table 530 shown in Fig. 5C. The table in Fig. 5C includes such items as "customer ID", "name", "address", "credit card number", "expiration date", and "card holder". These items do not have features that match the above mentioned features of the electronic ticket information. Therefore, the customer table 530 in Fig. 5C of the Walker patent is completely different from the user account unit according to the present invention.

The description in Walker, from col. 7, line 58 to col. 8, line 62 relates to ticket reselling service and, particularly, describes a guaranteed purchase offer backed by a pre-authorized credit card transaction. The central controller acts as a ticket reseller and ensures credibility of a buyer by the buyer's credit card and credibility of a seller by the seller's credit card (col. 7, lines 65-67 and col. 8, lines 9-12). From col. 7, line 58 to col. 8, line 25, there is no description about such operation by the controller for accessing an account unit corresponding to the account storage address as is accomplished by operations recited in the present claims 1 and 3. The description at col. 8, lines 26-41 relates to acquisition of user ID (buyer ID or seller ID) by the central controller where the user does not have an ID or has forgotten it. The ID thus obtained is transferred to the user. There is no description related to an issuer unit accessing a user account unit.

The description at col. 4, lines 62-67 and col. 5, lines 1-7 with reference to Fig. 5c relates to the customer table 530 as mentioned above. The table 530 stores customer identifiers each assigned to a user during a registration process and serves to ensure the credibility of a customer. The credit card number stored in record 546 can be accessed by using the customer ID 532 as an

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address. This corresponds to accessing a user identifier in the invention by using an account storage address. The corresponding credit card number in the Walker patent can be considered as a user identifier. Each row in the customer table 530 may be construed as a user's account unit. However, there is no description about the central controller either obtaining customer identifier from the table 530 or preparing electronic ticket information inclusive of an issuer's or a transferrer's signature.

Although the customer table 530 includes user identifiers, the table 530 does not include electronic ticket information (i.e., electronic ticket information). A user may transmit a user ID and an offer of purchase to the central controller (Fig. 7c, step 712 and Fig. 7b, step 718), and the central controller accesses a customer table to obtain the user's credit card number to check credibility of the user.

If the Examiner regards the credit card number as the electronic ticket information, then the credit card number does not include a user identifier and the credit card number is not an object to be sold. In the Walker system, electronic tickets to be sold are stored in the OFFER TABLE 550 shown in Fig. 5d.

The description at col. 7, lines 58-67 and col. 8, lines 1-62 teaches nothing about the central controller transmitting electronic ticket information to the account unit, and the description at col. 4, lines 4, lines 62-65 and col. 5, lines 1-7 does not show the account unit storing the electronic ticket information.

The description at col. 8, lines 10-25 of the patent relates to processes for checking on credibility of the seller and if satisfied, voiding the ticket and assigning a replacement ticket number. The description at col. 8, lines 26-67 relates to obtaining a customer identifier and has nothing to do with ticket examination. Particularly, the processes in steps 706, 708 and 710 in Fig. 7a relate to issuance or transmission of an ID when a user does not have a customer ID or when the user does not remember his customer ID. In the latter case step 710 checks to determine whether the information provided by the user matches information already stored, the ID is retrieved and transmitted to the user (col. 8, lines 43-59). The check on the user information in the Walker patent has nothing to do with the check on the validity of an electronic ticket (i.e., electronic ticket information) in the present invention.

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In Walker, in col. 7, line 65 to col. 8, line 3, it is described that "upon receiving the offer, central controller 200 contacts the buyer's credit issuer to ensure that the buyer has a valid credit card account and/or sufficient credit to pay for the requested tickets", and at col. 8, lines 10-13, it is described that central controller 200 processes the acceptance and contacts the seller's credit card issuer to ensure that there is sufficient credit to cover a potential penalty for non-performance". Thus, the controller has to contact the credit card issuer. On the other hand, in the present invention, certification guaranteeing a relationship between the user identifier and the account storage address is sent to the controller for verification.

Regarding the Anderson patent, Fig. 6 shows an example of electronic check 110 attached with an account certificate in which account number, payer's public key and bank's signature for the payer's public key are provided. However, there is no certificate which guarantees the relationship between the user ID and the account. According to the description at col. 28, lines 5-9, the electronic check includes a public key 134 signed by the bank holding the account with the bank's private key. The payer's public key is used to verify the payer's signature 126 (col. 26, lines 3-5).

In the Anderson patent, since there is no concept of providing account units on the network accessible with corresponding account storage addresses assigned to users having IDs, there is no concept of certifying the relationships between an account storage address and a user ID. That is, in the electronic check shown in Fig. 6, there is no account storage address because the user's account is created in the bank. The payee verifies the payer's signature 126 and the bank's signature 140 so as to check the validity of the electronic check.

In contrast, in the present invention, the account unit transmits to the issuer unit a certificate of account storage address which guarantees a correspondence between the account storage address assigned to the user and an identifier of the user. As defined in claim 27, the issuer unit verifies the certificate and creates an electronic ticket inclusive of the user identifier.

In specific response to the Examiner's final rejection in the parent case, applicant incorporates by reference points 1-10 listed in the Remarks of the previously filed amendment after final rejection.

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Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 20162-00557-US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

Morris Liss

Registration No.: 24,510

CONNOLLY BOVE LODGE & HUTZ LLP

1990 M Street, N.W., Suite 800

Washington, DC 20036-3425

(202) 331-7111

(202) 293-6229 (Fax)

Attorney for Applicant